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CONTACT: Travis Linquist

916/445-5566

SACRAMENTO SENIOR VOLUNTEERS HAS LASTING IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Foster Grandparent Spends His Days Teaching English to Students

SACRAMENTO - The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV) *Spotlight* features the dedicated work of Robert Beckett, a Foster Grandparent from the Sacramento area. At 94 years young, Mr. Beckett spends 5 hours a day teaching math and English to foreign born students.

After retiring as an auctioneer, Mr. Beckett looked for a way to fill his time and help his community. Taking the advice of his wife, he joined the Foster Grandparent program. He now spends his days volunteering in a classroom with 35 students. Many of these students are refugees from Mexico, China, the former Soviet Union, and Vietnam. All of the children are learning English as a second language.

Mr. Beckett teaches the students using a method called Total Physical Response. He puts together a collection of 100 common objects such as pens, pencils, combs, books, cups, colors, and numbers. Mr. Beckett holds up an object for his students who then say the name of the item, spell it, and then try to use it in a sentence. He then picks up another item and repeats the process for several hours a day. Mr. Beckett never gets frustrated and always takes whatever time the students need to feel confident about their learning process. In order to help them succeed he often lets the children help each other through difficulties to build their understanding of the English language.

"Robert is proof positive of the value of Foster Grandparents," Executive Director of GO SERV, David Muraki said. "He not only teaches these students English but he teaches them to help each other, instilling in them the value of helping someone succeed."

The GO SERV Spotlight recognizes people and programs, on a weekly basis, making a difference in their communities through service and volunteerism. To view the full Spotlight story, visit the GO SERV website at www.goserv.ca.gov. Visitors to the GO SERV site can nominate someone for a Spotlight award and/or find a volunteer opportunity in their community through the volunteer match program.

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